

Republican SINN FÉIN Poblachtach

Theobald Wolfe Tone Commemoration
Bodenstown, County Kildare

2002

'True Republicans are those who actively struggle to end British rule in Ireland'

THE annual Wolfe Tone Commemoration took place at Bodenstown, Co Kildare on June 16, sponsored by the National Commemoration Committee.

The parade formed up at Sallins Village at 12.30pm and marched behind the National Colour Party, Cumann na mBan, Na Fianna Éireann and the Dr Arthurs' Memorial Accordion Band from the Glens of Antrim to Bodenstown Cemetery. In its June edition SAOIRSE reported that the ceremony was in danger of being swamped this year by the Provisionals who held their own commemoration on the same day.

True Republicans assembled at the earlier starting time of 12.30pm to avoid a confrontation, whether verbal or physical, with those who have abandoned the Republican Cause. In torrential rain Republicans from all over Ireland marched to the grave of the Father of Irish Republicanism at Bodenstown where the ceremony was chaired by Joe O'Neill, Bundoran, Co Donegal, Ard-Cisteoir, Republican Sinn Féin. People disembarking from buses from all over Ireland had their names taken by 26-County Special Branch political police in an attempt to intimidate them but this did not succeed.

The flags were dipped as the Last Post and Reveille was sounded and a laurel wreath was laid on behalf of the Leadership of the Republican Movement by Veteran Republican John Gilraine, Leitrim and Dublin. Peig Galligan gave a moving address on behalf of the National Graves Association and a short message from Republican Sinn Féin Patron, George Harrison, New York was read by Líta Ní Chathmhaoil, Ard-Rúnaí, Sinn Féin Poblachtach.

The oration was given by Ruairí Óg Ó Brádaigh, Publicity Officer, Republican Sinn Féin and editor of SAOIRSE and his address is carried here in full:

Republican SINN FÉIN Poblachtach

Theobald Wolfe Tone Commemoration Bodenstown, County Kildare

“Two hundred and four years after the death of Theobald Wolfe Tone, founder of the United Irishmen and the father of Irish Republicanism, his aims of an Ireland united, independent and democratic have not yet been achieved.

Wolfe Tone, described by the Easter 1916 leader James Connolly as “the most far-seeing Irishman of his day” travelled to Belfast on October 18, 1791 to found the Society of United Irishmen. Under their leadership the 600-year-old tradition of Irish Separatism was given a new direction and a new lease of life; inspired by the French Revolution and the American War of Independence.



As well as national independence, the United Irishmen sought equality, democracy and the Rights of Man. Tone explained his purpose in his writings: ‘To break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country — these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter — these were my means.’

Crucially, his aim to unite ‘Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter’ was frustrated by the British policy and system in Ireland which refused to concede equality, democracy and civil rights. After 1793 England was at war with France and her policy in Ireland was to crush the popular movement for democracy. The United Irishmen became a Revolutionary

Republican organisation committed to ‘Republican government and a separation from England’, and sought the help of the new French Republic to fight for an Irish Republic.

Tone travelled to France and his great triumph lay in his success, alone in Paris with few resources, in getting the Revolutionary Government there to listen to him and supply French arms and men. ‘That Ireland was not able of herself to throw off the yoke, I knew. I therefore sought for aid wherever it was to be found,’ he said.

Republican SINN FÉIN Poblachtach

Theobald Wolfe Tone Commemoration Bodenstown, County Kildare

With the defeat of the insurgents in 1798 and the capture and death in prison of Tone at the age of 35, the 1798 Rising was over but the Irish Republican Movement, founded by the United Irishmen, has endured down to the present day.

The unbroken tradition of Republican Separatism continued with Robert Emmet, the Young Irelanders, the Fenians, the Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army down to Bobby Sands and his comrades who died on hunger strike in the H-Blocks and in English prisons.

The true Republicans of today are those who actively struggle to end English rule in Ireland and establish the sovereignty, democracy and rights of the Irish nation. Patrick Pearse reminded us in 1915 that whenever Irish leaders abandoned Tone's aim of 'breaking the connection with England', abandoning what Pearse called the national position, they were repudiated by the next generation.

A rising generation of Irish people will similarly repudiate the Provisional leadership who have in the past year conspired against Irish Republicanism by the voluntary destruction of arms given to them for the freedom of Ireland.

This betrayal at the behest of the British government, unprecedented in Irish history, saw weapons being used to secure, maintain and expand their heavily-subsidised offices



in Westminster, Stormont and Leinster House. The choice for the Provisionals' military machine is stark: disband now or sink to the level of a party militia trying to control sections of the nationalist people in the Six Counties in the interests of British rule and ultimately actually enforcing that rule.

Despite the fog of media misrepresentation and spin-doctoring it is becoming clearer to ordinary Irish people that they have been betrayed by the Provisional leadership and that a section of those who fought to



Republican SINN FÉIN Poblachtach

Theobald Wolfe Tone Commemoration Bodenstown, County Kildare

break the connection with England now accept that rule and administer it in the Six Occupied Counties.

The true Republicans include those political prisoners who are being denied political status in Maghaberry and Portlaoise jails, facing loyalist attack and threats to their families. They include Republican Sinn Féin members who are prevented from taking part in political work while they await trial in a Special non-jury Court on trumped-up charges that are the envy of every dictatorship and repressive regime in the world. It is worth noting also the acts of continued resistance to British rule by the Continuity IRA during the year.

This week's leaks from the Stevens inquiry that there was 'institutionalised collusion' between the British Crown Forces and loyalist death squads, creating a climate in which nationalists could be 'murdered with near impunity' is a major blow to those who pretend that the renaming of the RUC as the PSNI is anything other than a public relations exercise. It will also not surprise Republicans that Stevens concluded that loyalists were incapable of carrying out targeted assassinations without



significant help from the Crown Forces. In the past the B-Specials became the UDR who became the RIR but they remained part of the British Crown Forces. The RUC/PSNI is still a British police force in Ireland and Republicans and nationalists can see by the ongoing attacks on nationalists and their homes in north Belfast the Short Strand over recent

weeks and months that nothing has changed.

Republicans and especially the sons and daughters of activists must realise that the first duty of British police forces in Ireland has always been to maintain British rule. The British government still recruits, trains, motivates, arms, pays and directs the RUC/PSNI, and Republicans will continue to oppose it and appeal to nationalists throughout Ireland not to join it.

Republican Sinn Féin is convinced that the Provisionals will join the renamed RUC. It is only a matter of time. Their role in the RUC/PSNI is obvious. Like all those parties who abandoned the 32-County Republic and embrace constitutionalism — poachers turned gamekeepers — they will be more bitterly opposed to the Republican Movement than the original establishment parties.

The success of the Provisionals in gaining seats in Leinster House will have the same impact as the seats won by Stickies before them. It will make no difference what position they achieve within the Free State system and/or the Stormont system.

Republican SINN FÉIN Poblachtach

Theobald Wolfe Tone Commemoration Bodenstown, County Kildare

Having the Provisionals firmly embedded in Leinster House, Stormont and Westminster will only strengthen those systems as they move farther away from Irish freedom.

In January 1999 Republican Sinn Féin warned that the Stormont Agreement institutionalised sectarianism and was a recipe for instability and conflict into the future. This has been evident from ongoing attacks on Holy Cross Primary School in Ardoyne, the nationalist enclaves of the Short Strand, Garvaghy Road and north Belfast.

The 1998 Stormont Agreement was fundamentally dishonest in the contradictory manner in which it was 'sold' to nationalists and unionists and has inflamed the insecurity of loyalists.

As the loyalists feel threatened by what they see as the nationalists advancing politically and economically they have responded by widespread attacks on vulnerable nationalist areas, co-ordinated by the loyalist death squads the UDA/UFF and the UVF.

Unionists were told the agreement was a bulwark against Irish national independence while nationalists were told it was stepping stone towards that goal. In fact the Stormont Agreement's ambiguity has been used as a means of repackaging and stabilising the status quo to serve British and US geo-political interests. This includes making Ireland "safe" for British and American capital and stopping in its tracks a true Republican Movement fighting for a genuinely independent and non-aligned Ireland. It is worth noting in this connection the meeting in the US between the Provisionals' leader and the US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld — no doubt discussing the Provisionals' compliance with the continuation of US military bases in the Six Counties.

Like the equally bogus Oslo peace accord of 1993 between Israel and Palestine, the Stormont Agreement is a "permanent interim" arrangement which perpetuates instability and conflict and, in the case of Ireland, papers over with a fraudulent 'peace' the central issue of Britain's partition of this country and the denial of national self-determination.

The current process in the Six Counties is not a peace process, it is a surrender process. It is a sell-out of the national position of an independent and sovereign Ireland free from outside interference. It will not work and condemns us all to 20, 30 or 40 more years of conflict.

How can we achieve peace with justice? Only the ÉIRE NUA policy can provide a just and lasting peace in a federation of the four provinces with decentralisation of power to local communities in the context of a British withdrawal. It is the viable alternative to the failed Stormont Agreement.

Republican SINN FÉIN Poblachtach

Theobald Wolfe Tone Commemoration Bodenstown, County Kildare

Republican Sinn Féin took part in the historic defeat of the Nice Treaty in the 26-County referendum last year. We warned at the time that if the Establishment politicians ignored the outcome of the referendum and tried to force the Nice Treaty back on the people again, accompanied by a massive brainwashing exercise, it would be an 'act of dictatorship'. As we now know that is just what the Establishment parties are attempting. The promised declarations on neutrality are worthless and not legally binding.

In this situation, we call on voters in the 26 Counties and young people in particular, to reject the Nice Treaty for a second time next October, when the second referendum on the exact same treaty as was rejected in 2001 is planned.

By doing so we can give a voice to all the people of Europe who were denied any vote on the Nice Treaty and who oppose the undemocratic rush to form a European army linked to NATO.

Our three pillars of opposition to Nice still stand:

- 1. The centralisation of power and the loss of the members States' veto;*
- 2. The domination by the larger States through the 'enhanced co-operation' provisions; and*
- 3. The militarisation of the EU.*

We reiterate that we are not opposed to EU enlargement, which is merely a smokescreen to hide the real issues.

The arrogance and hypocrisy of the Establishment parties on this important issue is breathtaking. Mr Ahern accepted the 'No' vote in the recent abortion referendum and said 'the people have spoken'. The people also said 'No' to the Nice Treaty in 2001 but Mr Ahern and his colleagues refuse to accept it. The only answer to this is the rejection of the Nice Treaty by an even greater majority this time."